

**Illinois Early Learning Council  
Data, Research, and Evaluation Committee  
Monday, January 28<sup>th</sup>  
10:00 am - 12:00 pm  
Ounce of Prevention Fund  
33 W. Monroe, Suite 2400  
Chicago, IL 60603**

**Meeting Notes**

**Meeting Participants**

*In-Person:* Carie Bires, Bernard Cesarone, Kim Collins, Angela Farwig, Jana Fleming, Karen Freel, Nicole Gillis, Bob Goerge, Theresa Hawley, Elliot Regenstein, Bob Spatz, Teri Talan, Dawn Thomas

*Phone:* David Alexander, Serah Fatani, Dan Harris, Lisa Hood, TeeNeka Jones, Brenda Klosterman, Michael Stelmach, Gwen Williams (for Beth Hanselman)

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

The next meeting tentatively set for April 4<sup>th</sup> might have to be changed. A follow up email will be sent to solidify this date. Nicole (staffer) is going to be moving back to the East Coast and work on finding her replacement has begun. The Committee will be kept updated as to when a new staffer will be beginning.

**2. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**

The minutes from the 10/15 meeting were formally approved.

**3. JSI – Q2 Deliverables**

Michael Stelmach, Project Manager for JSI, provided a brief review of the Q2 deliverables - the RIN (Recipient Identification Number) Analysis Report and the CEDS (Common Education Data Standards) Analysis Report.

**a. RIN Analysis Report**

- JSI used input from the Q1 deliverables (which is a review of the existing and planned systems) to identify how unique identifiers were being captured and managed in the various early childhood related systems.
- Key takeaway from this analysis is that there are multiple unique ids and it is unlikely that a single unique identifier is going to be able to be used by these different systems in the short term. The unified system strategy needs to embrace this notion that there will be multiple unique identifiers and put the mechanisms in place to track those multiple unique identifiers.
- RIN is a widely used unique identifier across many agencies and programs and has a pretty robust capability (although there are improvements recommended in the report). In the end, the technical architecture of the unified system and ultimately the system design will have to have modules in place that tracks these multiple unique identifiers.

### Questions/Feedback:

*Is there an alternative or other strategy than to have multiple master indices across multiple data systems within the state?*

- If you accept the premise that the IL Health and Information Exchange network will ultimately have the largest group of IL population (both children and adults) within their data structures, that unique identifier strategy could be view as one that is potentially a statewide approach. DHS, specifically the framework of the Integrated Eligibility System project, has indicated a preliminary commitment to the strategy that has been developed by IL Health and Information Exchange for a unique identifier approach. If there is ever a need for eliminating multiple unique identifiers, that seems to be the most likely candidate as of today.
- The RIN is embedded within the multiple Legacy systems that it supports so weaning off the RIN is no small challenge. The SIS represents the same type of challenge. In the future, it seems like there will be multiple unique identifiers in the multiple systems. Part of JSI's recommendation is that there needs to be an identifier manager, such as the unified system, to manage the identify resolution process for these records when they cross from one agency group to another.

*Stress importance of identify resolution process and having staff assigned to resolve discrepancies manually. Who will be the identifier arbiter? (Not to be answered by JSI, but a question the state needs to answer).*

- This is a larger governance conversation, which has started to happen (i.e. P-20 Council). All the points raised lead to the Q3 efforts where we are looking at technical architecture and system design and related governance structure.
- Groups will need to collaborate to resolve these challenges, which may take years. From a technical view, when JSI talks about identify resolution that is actually a module of the system that looks at demographic data elements and tries to reconcile that "Sally Smith" here and "Sally Smith" there are in fact the same person. For the partial matches, there will need to be a group to manually review these records.
- Past experience suggests that when the system first comes online there will be a lot of that activity that may go on for years until the data sets and overall data quality improve.

*In review of other state's work, is there another state that has figured out a way to truly have a universal identifier for the various systems we are trying to integrate?*

- No, all the other reviewed states had the same sets of challenges IL is looking at. JSI found that other states know what the challenges are (as we do), but to the extent they have addressed them has not been much. They have developed subsets of functionality, where modules were built to do things, but the overall system capability will take years to evolve. It is a worthwhile endeavor even though it will take years to resolve.

### **b. CEDS Analysis Report**

- The second report is a review of the Common Education Data Standards (CEDS). In these integrated environments, these systems need to talk the same language and CEDS has been the accepted standard for forward thinking efforts for system integration.

- JSI's responsibility through this deliverable was to review the DRE Committee's ten policy questions and do a comparative analysis of how CEDS supported those questions. There is a detailed review in the appendix of the report. Generally speaking, the CEDS data standards do support the policy questions with a few small exceptions.
- JSI also reviewed the Early Childhood Program Standards and found that CEDS does not support these standards, but didn't think that was necessarily the intent given the nature of those standards.
- CEDS are relatively new, voluntary, and are not widely implemented in today's systems. While they are being considered in future plans (i.e., with ILDS), there is a danger - just saying that you are compliant with a set of data standards does not mean your systems are inter-operable. It takes an active effort through a governance structure to ensure that those standards are constructively and thoroughly implemented so that the systems can talk to one another.
- Another challenge is that CEDS compliance is low within the existing systems. There are systems that have been online for over twenty years while CEDS didn't exist and even with the newer systems there wasn't any mandate to suggest that those systems needed to be designed and built to be in compliance with CEDS. This is another indicator supporting the need for a unified system with modules that can do data translation and normalization and provide quality assurance over the data that does exist in order to reach some level of compliance.

Questions/Feedback:

*Important for feedback loop - for the unified system to provide feedback to feeding systems and provide for some accountability if the feeding systems continue to report high rates of errors.*

*One priority is to determine the (unduplicated) number of children receiving Head Start, child care, and preschool services in IL. At some point, might want to know or be able to measure the children not being served in state-funded programs (i.e. using vital statistics).*

#### **4. Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Update**

- Plan was approved and the grant was awarded on December 31<sup>st</sup>.
- Now, we are in the scope of work development phase where details are added to the plan turned in for the grant application and go through a negotiating process with federal officers to plan out the work for the next four years. There will be a training, then two months to develop the scope of work, and then another three months for the feds to reply to the scope of work. Until this process is complete, we are not supposed to proceed full force.
- 10% of the funding has been released, which allows us to start bringing on some staff. On the data-side, there is funding to hire a few people for ISBE to work on early childhood data issues. Another person will be hired at OECD to work on these issues and do some data analysis (general job description for Data and Outcomes Manager is in appendix of application and a link will be sent to the committee once officially posted).
- At DHS, there is a million dollars for data work, but are still in the process of deciding what needs to be done.

- Would be helpful to set a committee meeting in the next to 6-8 weeks to react to JSI report and make some recommendations.
- Improved data use is seen as a relatively bi-partisan federal role - there may be potential for additional funding.

## **5. Revised Work Plan & Next Steps**

Focus on objectives 2-4 (with objective 1 being the JSI work that was discussed earlier).

### Objective 2

- This objective is related to working with rest of the ELC to identify data, research, and evaluation needs.
- There are a number of members who are both a part of this committee and participate on other committees. Thinking about role of members to 1) encourage other committee to identify potential data, research, and evaluation work and 2) report back to the DRE committee what is going on in the other committees.
- Want to have a conversation about formalizing this communication process without creating an excessive amount of work since everyone is a volunteer. Some can happen at the staffer level, but it might be important to have information from those that were there to capture the nuances.
- Committee decided on using two methods: a form and/or send information through email to staffer. Members will decide which to use depending on the context.
- Will circulate a draft form and send out draft inventory of committee overlap.
- Quick reminder - please fill out the survey if you haven't had a chance yet.
- Important to connect with ISBE KIDS Advisory Board, HV Taskforce (own subcommittee related to evaluation of programs), and Children's Mental Health Partnership.
- DRE Committee may be able to play a role in collecting information about theses and research reports that have been done and by providing a list of areas that still need to be addressed by research/evaluation.

### Objectives 3 and 4

- These objectives get deeper into developing a research and evaluation agenda.
- Ounce is tracking national listservs for research and evaluation reports as they are completed and sends out a digest that summarizes these reports. In 2013, the Ounce is hoping to do a year end summary. So for the category of completed research, there is a mechanism in place that is tracking the research that is getting done.
- More information is needed about projects that are underway. IECAM is developing a taxonomy that will help guide this project.
- It's important to give organizations or other advisory bodies a framework to feed their information into. Potentially use government grant or foundation funded projects as a source of information - relatively limited number of funders. Once the taxonomy is completed, share that with our foundation partners at the state level to get a starting list of what is being funded. We will have to figure out how to track federal work - potentially through other partners, like Child Trends.

- Need to have conversations about how to monitor the quality of the reports. A couple of ways might be to 1) list research with a caveat that we are not vouching for the quality or 2) indirectly hint at the lack of quality and need for additional research through our recommendations. Harriet Dichter when in PA asked for the department to come up with criteria that might be worth considering. This speaks to how the document is going to be introduced – be clear up front what this list is and what it is not.
- Let's make sure not to exclude qualitative research.
- ICEPR is having an upcoming meeting on February 21<sup>st</sup> in Chicago. This would be a good connection to have to discuss policy and research questions. Co-chairs of DRE Committee have reached out and had initial conversations with Deb Bragg (ICEPR).
- Small addition to work plan based on tasks that were assigned to the DRE Committee in the RTT-ELC grant.

#### **ACTION ITEMS FROM MEETING:**

- ☐ ***Email link of job description for Data and Outcomes Manager at OECD to committee***
- ☐ ***Set a committee meeting in the next to 6-8 weeks to react to latest JSI report***
- ☐ ***Circulate a draft communications form and send out draft inventory of committee overlap***
- ☐ ***Send reminder about the DRE Committee Survey***
- ☐ ***Reach out to Harriet Dichter about criteria for evaluating the quality of research/evaluation reports***
- ☐ ***Continue relationship building with ICEPR***
- ☐ ***Follow up with IECAM about development of the taxonomy***